KEY FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

RIGHT-SIZING RESEARCH SECURITY: A SURVEY OF CHINESE-BACKGROUND SCIENTISTS IN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES

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October 2026



Respondent Profile

50% were permanent residents of Chinese heritage; **44%** were Australian citizens



96% were born in mainland China



58% identified engineering or technology as their main field; **29%** identified natural sciences



58% were associate professors or professors



60% had more than 10 years of research experience in their field



85% had conducted research in Australia for at least seven years



69% reported working in a critical or emerging technology field



Research Collaboration with China

93% had current or previous experience of China-related research collaboration.



63% were currently collaborating.

87% currently reported at least one co-authored publication per year, compared with



83% around five years ago.

81% had established collaboration through personal academic networks



72% established collaboration through academic activities such as conferences, seminars and visits.

60% currently reported at least one informal scholarly collaboration or research advice interaction per year, compared with



59% five years ago.



More structured forms of collaboration were reported less frequently than five years ago.

	5 years ago		Current	Change
Joint grants	39%	→	26%	↓ -13pp
Joint research projects	38%	→	28%	↓ -10pp
Co-supervision	47%	→	37%	↓ -10pp
Hosting or visiting researchers	63%	→	55%	↓ - 8pp

Views on Research Security Risk and Policy Settings

62%

agreed or strongly agreed that Australia needs policies to manage national security risks in international research collaboration.

96%

agreed or strongly agreed that China-related research collaboration provides important benefits to Australia's research system.

73%

agreed or strongly agreed that research security risks in China-related collaboration should be assessed case by case.

71%

disagreed or strongly disagreed that Australian government guidance on research security risk is clear and practical.

75%

disagreed or strongly disagreed that research security policies are applied consistently across countries according to the specific risks of each collaboration.

84%

considered the overall level of scrutiny applied to China-related research collaboration to be too strict.

Perceived change in underlying risk over the past five years *(context)*



There was no majority view that national security risks in China-related research collaboration had increased.

Experience of Research Security Requirements and Effects on Research

60%

had received research security training.

Among those trained, **48%** rated it at least moderately useful.

39%

reported that China-related collaboration had prompted additional questions, review, follow-up or approval beyond routine processes.

73%

reported that security-related requirements had affected their research at least moderately.

45% reported a significant or very significant effect.

63%

reported visa-related complications.

50% reported difficulties hosting, supervising or recruiting.

49% reported project approval delays.

57%

reported having avoided, changed, delayed or ended China-related collaboration because of research security policies, procedures or related institutional expectations.

61%

often or very frequently consider security implications when making research decisions.

Inclusion, Belonging and Career Intentions

52%

did not feel comfortable discussing collaborations with institutions in mainland China, Hong Kong or Macau within their university.

55%

were not confident that their personal background does not inappropriately influence how their collaborations are perceived.

61%

reported that current debates had negatively affected their sense of belonging within Australian academia.

50%

did not feel comfortable maintaining visible connections with China-related research networks, topics or public discussion.

77%

agreed that Chinese-background researchers can play a constructive bridging role between Australia and China.

59% did not consider current conditions to allow that role to be played effectively.

23%

reported uncertainty about remaining in Australia, or having left, where research security concerns were at least one factor.